



LOCAL DIVISION 1548
AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION AFL-CIO, CLC
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May 31, 2023

Select Board
Town of West Tisbury Massachusetts
Post Office Box 278
West Tisbury, Massachusetts
02575-0278

Dear Board Members

RE: M.G.L. 161B Section 25:

My name is Charles Ryan, and I am the President / Business Agent for the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1548 in Plymouth Massachusetts. I represent the bus drivers on Martha's Vineyard who drive for the VTA. I am informing you that the Administrator of the VTA is in violation of state law. She is running the day-day operation of the transit system by interfering with the management company that is hired to run the system. Now she has taken it one step further and has involved herself in the contract negotiations, which is a clear violation of state law.

Each town on the island pays the VTA annually for bus service and is entitled to have a representative on the advisory board. That board is actually the Administrator's boss, but you would never know it the way it is being run. Over the past few years bus service on the island has been reduced. The VTA is blaming the union for those cuts when the real reason is the VTA itself.

There has never been more federal money for transit in the 32 years I have been doing this job. The reason for service cuts is that the VTA cannot hire drivers for the wages they are offering. It has also come to my attention that some of the summer drivers are being forced to share a room. Because of that some have refused to work there.

The citizens of the island deserve much better. Your community deserves a better system for what you are paying. I urge you to have your representative on the board make changes to the system that are desperately needed. There is plenty of funding to pay these drivers a living wage and have a sustainable plan to attract new drivers so that all the service cuts can be returned to your town. It is not my intent to damage the system or have another strike. It is my intent to increase service and improve transit.

During a recent FOIA request it was learned that the VTA has paid a second company, Yankee Bus Lines, over \$247,500.00 since January 1, 2023, to supply additional drivers at a cost of \$750.00 per driver per day. If this money was spent on the current drivers there would be no shortage of drivers and no need to cut service on the island.

At this time the Union is planning legal action against the VTA Administrator for violating state law. I have tried to reason with her and even offered a federal program to get her the drivers she needs and be refunded 50% of their wages for the first year. She has rejected every attempt I have made so I feel legal action is necessary for her to comply. Your board member has the authority to force her to comply, but the members don't realize who the boss is. Many of them just go with the flow and rubber stamp everything she wants. Ultimately it comes back to the select board as you are the ones who appoint the advisory board members. I would be happy to provide you with any additional information you might need.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Ryan III
President / Business Agent

